

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Reflection by Sue Rogers

(from 5/20/2020 Bethelite)



– *Sue Rogers, RIC Steering Team Member*

I have lived in Madison for 40 years after having grown up in a small rural community in northern Illinois. The move was quite a shock to my system but I loved living in a college town and was intrigued with the diversity of people (as compared to my little village). In 1981, I began my career as an RN at UW Hospital. Another shock and a very steep learning curve!

At the age of 21, I was taking care of some of the young men diagnosed with AIDS that started arriving at the hospital who were, sadly, lying on their deathbeds. There was no Google or email system to rely on to learn more about this illness and how to protect ourselves and others. We were simply told to wear full isolation gear and to be careful. That's when I noticed that some of my colleagues, nurses and doctors, stood back from this patient population whenever possible and would occasionally make some judgmental comments. I found their attitudes disappointing. I'm thankful for having been an RN during this time because it made me realize the importance of approaching every patient with compassion and respect regardless of their background or disease.

Over the years, I've watched the struggle of LGBTQ people in our community as they worked for social justice through activism. It's been a long, long road and there's still work to be done so that they are fully integrated throughout our society, including church. It's time.

As an ally, I look forward to being a part of the RIC team as we strive toward an intentional welcome with full participation of people from diverse backgrounds and orientations. All God's children have a right to belong and worship in a safe space for spiritual growth. My hope is that we will build a community of diverse relationships by breaking bread together, serving together and worshiping together. The title of an article in a recent Gather magazine was "Be together, not the same". Our faith can be richer and deeper if we truly welcome all to Christ's house and table. There's plenty of room for everyone!